

Tony Blair said 7 years ago that he was going to end poverty in Britain by 2020. There were 4 million children living in poverty, and he said, as a matter of national direction and vision, that he was going to eliminate poverty for children by 2020. This is what they have done. They will have a minimum wage of \$9.80—\$9.80—an hour this October. They have moved 1.8 million children out of poverty over the last 4 years. The United States has refused to increase the minimum wage, and we have put 1.4 million children into poverty. That is completely unacceptable.

This is the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has consumed 5 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I reserve the remainder of my time. How much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 28 minutes 48 seconds remaining.

Mr. KENNEDY. I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I yield 15 minutes to the Senator from Alabama.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask that I be notified when I have consumed 12 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will so notify the Senator.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I didn't expect to hear the Democratic leader talk about the immigration bill this morning and his and Senator KENNEDY's desire to rush it through the House of Representatives, calling for action now. It is a very bad bill, and it impacts directly the issues we are talking about today—wages for working Americans. I am going to talk about that issue and ask our colleagues to give serious thought to the matters I will raise.

With regard to our colleagues who claim they are concerned about poverty among American workers, I ask those Members—Senator REID and Senator KENNEDY—who proposed the immigration bill and tried to rush it through this Senate without any amendments to consider some of the concerns of their own allies, economists and professors, who believe that if passed, it would damage the wages of American workers.

I agree that we have a troubling condition in our country. People have referred to it often as the wage gap, that higher income people seem to be doing well, but there has been a lag in performance among lower income workers. That has caused quite a bit of concern. I am not sure exactly what the economic numbers show on that, but repeatedly, we have been told often from our Democratic colleagues—but not so much lately—that there is a growing gap in income. Why is this occurring? I wish to share some thoughts about it because I believe it is important.

Let me mention this: I don't want the American worker to have a \$7.25-an-hour job; I want them to have a \$15-an-hour job, a \$30-an-hour job. That is what we want in an economy that is growing and prosperous. We want a full-employment economy where people can choose jobs that fulfill their highest aspirations and pay them a good wage, with good retirement and good health care, and we are creating a growing economy that nurtures that. But for some reason, the wages in some job markets have not kept up as well as they should.

I will read from a number of experts on this matter and ask my colleagues to think about it, not what I say but what the experts say. I am looking at a Washington Post article from Jonathan Weisman, March 31, dealing with this precise issue of minimum wage and immigration. It is titled "Immigration Divides Allies, Guest Worker Plan Sets Democratic Supports Against Organized Labor." It starts off saying this:

A growing body of economic research contends that the recent surge of foreign workers has depressed wages for low-skilled workers, especially for high school dropouts, and has even begun displacing native-born workers.

Then the article quotes Professor George Borjas, an economist at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He has written a definitive book on immigration, "Heaven's Door." He says:

What immigration really does is redistribute wealth away from workers toward employers.

I did mention my good friend Senator KENNEDY. Senator KENNEDY has been a champion for civil rights, and a champion for helping us fight poverty, and he cares about this issue very deeply. He sincerely does. But I suggest he is not always perfectly correct on how to fix it. We can have a legitimate debate about how to improve the wages of working Americans, and that is what we need to be talking about.

The article says:

Kennedy, the Senate's liberal lion and an unflagging ally of organized labor, says the [immigration] legislation he co-wrote would help all low-wage workers by applying minimum-wage laws and other . . . protections.

The AFL-CIO disagrees. According to John Sweeney, the AFL-CIO President:

Guest-worker programs cast [American] workers into a perennial second-class status and unfairly put their fates into their employers' hands, creating a situation ripe for exploitation. . . .

He goes on:

"They encourage employers to turn good jobs into temporary jobs at reduced wages and diminished working conditions and contribute to the growing class of workers laboring in poverty."

That was Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Weisman, the staff writer for the Washington Post, then quotes Professor Borjas:

But some of those macroeconomic gains have come at the expense of low-wage work-

ers, especially the 10 percent of the labor force that dropped out of high school. In recent years, competition from low-skilled immigrant workers has reduced the wages of high school dropouts by as much as 8 percent, Borjas said.

How about another professor, Andrew Sum, director of Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies. The article says quotes him:

Looking at annual earnings, the percentage losses are in the double digits, said Andrew Sum, director of Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies, because jobs that once provided year-round employment are increasingly becoming temporary.

A Northeastern University study found that nearly 86 percent—

Listen to this, I say to my colleagues, this is important for us.

A Northeastern study found that nearly 86 percent of all newly employed workers hired from 2000 to 2005 were immigrants. For men, the statistics were more stark. In that time, the labor market for men rose by 2.66 million while 2.77 million foreign-born men found work.

Listen to that: The Northeastern study found that foreign-born workers filled all of the new jobs created for men between 2000 and 2005, plus some other jobs.

In other words, Sum said, immigrants have begun replacing native-born male workers.

In the immigration bill floor debate, if we not forced the Democratic side to allow us to have some amendments and reduce some of the incredible increases in immigration under the bill as presented, it would have been shocking what the immigration bill would have done to the jobs and wages of American workers. Even after successful amendments that cut the numbers of low-skilled workers allowed to come in the future, the Senate bill will still, over 20 years, virtually triple the number of people coming into our country legally, not counting those who will continue to come illegally. That will undoubtedly impact our economy. That is why the House of Representatives needs to examine this bill very carefully before we go to conference.

How about this one? Professor Sum is quoted again in the Post article: "Young guys are being displaced by immigrants," he said. "Some of my good liberal friends take issue, but if you're a young worker under 25, poorly educated, probably African American, the higher the share of new immigrants in your community, the worse your employment prospects are becoming."

How about Carol Swain, a law professor and political scientist at Vanderbilt University? She is also quoted in the Post article:

"What they're doing is increasing the pool of people eligible to compete for the very limited resources that are available for the people at the bottom. . . . The obligation of the nation should be for the people who have been here for decades."

How about the famous economics professor Robert Samuelson? He wrote an article in May in the Washington Post titled "Still Dodging Immigration's Truths." He quotes approvingly